AI, Skill Erosion & Learning Debt

talentedgeweekly



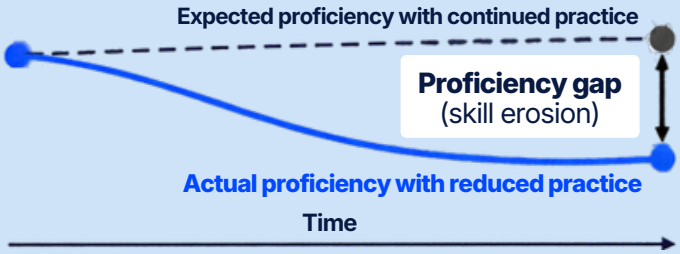
Developed by Brian Heger

1. UNDERSTAND THE RISKS

1. Skill erosion

Losing proficiency in capabilities employees already have.

***Example:** An experienced analyst becomes less proficient at independent analysis after routinely relying on AI.*



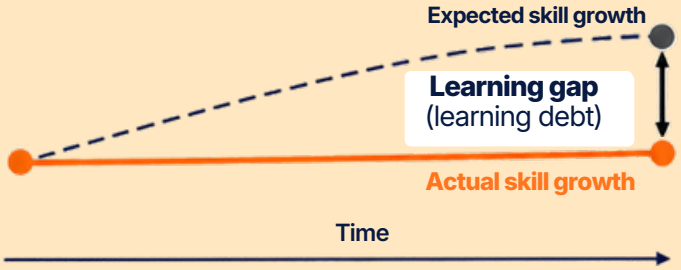
Proficiency declines when practice opportunities shrink.

Skill erosion: Concept informed by **BCG** article When Everyone Uses AI, Companies Risk Losing Critical Skills

2. Learning debt

Missing opportunities to develop future capabilities.

***Example:** A junior analyst uses AI for foundational tasks without developing the underlying analytical skills.*



Capability gaps grow when learning opportunities are reduced.

Learning debt: Concept informed by **AIGW Policy Observatory report** Workforce Architecture for the AI Enterprise

2. THE PRODUCTIVITY–CAPABILITY DILEMMA

The trade-off

AI can improve today's results, with faster completion, less effort, and higher output, while reducing opportunities to maintain or develop the skills needed tomorrow.

Higher Productivity Gains
(Near-term Results)

+

Future Skill Development
(Tomorrow's Capability)

The Goal

How do we maximize productivity gains today while developing the skills needed tomorrow?

The Challenge

Performance goals and reward systems may emphasize near-term results without equally reinforcing future capability development.

3. SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO GUIDE CHOICES

What Matters Most?

- Which skills are essential for making our highest-stakes or hardest-to-reverse decisions?
- Which skills will AI make more valuable, not less?

Where Are the Risks?

- Where is AI reducing opportunities for experienced employees to practice critical skills?
- Where has AI taken over early-career tasks that previously helped employees develop critical skills?

What Choices Will We Make?

- Which skills must we preserve or build, even at a short-term productivity cost?
- Which tasks can we safely delegate to AI because the underlying skills are less critical or can be readily rebuilt?

How Will We Respond?

- Do performance expectations reward skill development, or only short-term output?
- What early signals would show critical skills declining as productivity rises?

If you're an internal HR practitioner, learn about **my private community,** Talent Edge Circle

Talent Edge Circle
STAY ON THE EDGE, COME INTO THE CIRCLE